

2026–2027 GUIDE

Early Entrance to Kindergarten



Early Entrance

Children recommended for early entrance to kindergarten will need to demonstrate capabilities beyond expectations of the peer group warranting early admission and development in academic skills as well as social/emotional and physical development. The standards for early entrance are high to ensure that students are not frustrated by their advanced placement. There will be no consideration, including an appeals process, for children with birth dates beyond October 15.

Kindergarten—Children who will turn 5 years old between September 2 and October 15 are eligible for consideration for the early entrance to kindergarten process.

For more information, see Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) COMAR 13A.08.01.02 and the Montgomery County Board of Education Policy JEB, *Early Entrance to Prekindergarten, Kindergarten, and First Grade* and Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) Regulation JEB-RB, *Early Entrance to Prekindergarten, Kindergarten, and First Grade*.

Early Entrance to Kindergarten

What does the kindergarten program include?

The MCPS kindergarten program is based on a curriculum that promotes students' reading, writing, and mathematics competencies and offers challenging learning experiences for all students. The rigorous instructional program includes:

- a daily reading/writing/language arts block
- a daily mathematics block
- regular assessments to monitor progress and plan for continued instruction,
- small and large group instruction, and
- opportunities for independent learning activities.

The instructional program also includes science and social studies content as well as opportunities for students to engage in art, music, information literacy, and health and physical education instruction.

For more information, please contact the home school and schedule a visit to a kindergarten class.

Is Early Entrance to Kindergarten the best choice?

Please consider the following:

- The intent of the early entrance process is to make kindergarten available to younger students who demonstrate above-average performance and development, as measured by assessments administered by MCPS. A child's academic skills and social/emotional development are considered.

- These younger students need to be capable of working in a classroom setting with children older by a year or more.
- The standards for early entrance are high to ensure that students are not frustrated by their advanced placement.
- Entering school early is a long-term decision that parents/guardians are making for their child. The potential social/emotional impact on the child as the child progresses through elementary, middle, high school, and beyond is not predictable.
- Early Entrance to Kindergarten is not a replacement for child care. For information on child care, parents/guardians should contact LOCATE: Child Care at 877-261-0060 or www.marylandfamilynetwork.org/programs-services/locate/ to obtain a list of licensed child care providers in their neighborhood.

Why do applicants for Early Entrance have to be assessed when other children entering kindergarten do not?

According to Maryland state regulations (COMAR 13A.08.01.02), children who turn 5 on or before September 1 are age-eligible to enter kindergarten. Per state guidance, a child whose birth date falls between September 2 and October 15 may be considered for early entrance. No consideration will be given for children with birthdays beyond October 15. There will be no appeal process for children when the child's birthday falls beyond the October 15 window.

Children who are not age-eligible must demonstrate above-average performance and show proficiency with Kindergarten End of Year standards to qualify for early admission to Kindergarten. It is not necessary for children to study or prepare for the early childhood developmental assessments. Assessments include a variety of activities that measure each child's performance in the following developmental domains:

- Motor development
- Reading and language arts development
- Mathematical thinking

What should be expected of the screening process?

All early entrance to kindergarten assessments will occur between March 16–July 31, 2026. Assessments will be given face to face in the local school building. Schools will contact parents/guardians to schedule assessments sessions. Each child may be assessed only one time. At the time of the assessment, parents/guardians will be asked to sign a wellness disclosure form stating that the child is healthy and able to participate in assessment

activities. Parents/guardians must inform their child about the early entrance process before they participate in the assessments and activities. They should help their child to understand that participating does not mean automatic entry into kindergarten for the upcoming school year. Assessments will be conducted by MCPS staff members. To ensure health and safety for children and staff, each child will have their own assessment kit.

Parents/guardians of children participating in face to face assessment sessions may not be present during the assessment session. The school will provide a waiting area.

The results will not be available on the day of testing. The school team will review the assessment data and information and provide a written notification within 15 days of the assessment with their determination. The school administrator will contact the parent or guardian regarding the recommendation for early entrance.

How can a parent/guardian apply for Early Entrance to Kindergarten?

- First, parents/guardians should determine which MCPS school is their child's home school. To determine which school serves your neighborhood, call the Boundary Information Line at 240-314-4700, between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m., Monday–Friday. You also can use the School Assignment Tool found on the MCPS website at www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org, search School Assignment Tool. See Board Policy JEA, *Residency, Tuition, and Enrollment*.
- Then parents/guardians should complete the Early Entrance to Kindergarten application (MCPS Form 271-6, *Application for Early Entrance to Kindergarten*); and submit the completed application to their child's home school.
- The application can be obtained from the following locations:
 - Home school
 - MCPS website at www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/forms/pdf/271-6.pdf

- Parents/guardians should submit the completed application to the child's home school.
- Applications will be accepted beginning February 17 through June 30.

How can parents/guardians receive more information about the school's decision?

- Parents/guardians who wish further information about the school's decision may request a meeting with the school principal to discuss screening results and to share any additional information.

What are state requirements for nonpublic (alternative) and child care providers?

- According to MSDE regulations, children must be 5 years or older by September 1 to be age-eligible for kindergarten. The regulation also requires that a child be 3 or 4 years old by September 1 to be age-eligible for entry into a nursery school (age 3) or a nursery school program (age 4) respectively.

Where can additional kindergarten program information be found?

For specific information about the kindergarten curriculum and program expectations, parents/guardians may visit the Kindergarten Information & Resources page on the MCPS website at www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/enroll/kindergarten/

For a review of the Maryland State Curriculum expectations for kindergarten, visit the MSDE website at www.marylandpublicschools.org

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